then sometimes her glance would wander back from the vision to Judy.

"An' if hit's a girl-child," she would finish softly aloud, "you'll have to l'arn hit your ways."

IT was early in February when Nance shut the door on her own cabin and went over to live with Judy. It was a month of storms. Toward the very end, after a day when the blue skies and the soft air and the trickle of melting snow from the roof gave promise of early spring, there came a snowfall that was worse than any of all the winter. Silently and softly it began in the night. When the two women awoke in the morning, it was piled up high, and still coming down fast and straight. At noon it was coming down faster still. The wind had risen, and all the white peacefulness was changed to fury. For two days it raged, filling up the valleys and obliterating the trails. After the storm came bitter cold.

"If hit keeps on like this the men won't never be able to git here," Judy said. "But they kin stay, fer all us; we ain't a-needin' 'em, air we?" she smiled, to hide a little longing in her heart for her husband to be there at her side.

It was that very night that Nance was roused by her cries of agony.

There was only one mule on the place —Young Nick, left behind because he was no use in the woods. On Big Stoney no one asks of a mule that he shall be altogether gentle, but the cunning treachery of Young Nick put him into a class by himself. "He's got more tricks than the old Nick ever dreamed of," Pop said; but he kept him because of his marvelous strength and his good looks. Some day he meant to get the mastery over him. Strictest orders had been given to Nance never to mount him, and she had witnessed so many exhibitions of his meanness that even she had no desire to. But to-night it never occurred to her to hesitate. Bridle and saddle in hand, she went straight to his stall. Dazed by her effrontery, Young Nick took the bit before he knew it. Five minutes later she was galloping headlong down the trail.

It was that same trail where, less than a year before, the merrymakers had ridden up through the laurel to be at Judy's wedding. Prettier even than the trail itself then was the brown stream beside it, slipping on from sunshine to shadow with never a sound but its own soft murmur and the bird-song from the hidden depths of thicket and tree. But wilder and far more glorious is its beauty in winter, when it tears its way furiously through the ice-covered rocks. In the lowlands the streams were frozen deep; but Bear was a mountain stream—it couldn't stop to freeze. Colder than ice, its swollen waters laved the rocks high up on the banks and forged their way through miniature gorges and caverns of ice. Little flying beads of spray froze as they lighted on the jagged green leaves of holly and pine. But Nance had no eyes for the beauties of the way, nor even for the dazzling splendor of the moonlight on the snow, that gave such a superhuman glory to the whiteness of the night.

Not for one minute of that ten-mile ride could she relax her vigilance. At every step of the way it was a contest between her sheer will and Young Nick's. Something in the spell of the night came to her aid. Never in the mundane light of day could he have been persuaded to the adventure. Furiously she lashed him through the untrodden drifts. Twelve times the trail crossed the stream. She didn't wait till he refused the descent, but spurred him into the icy waters, where the swirling current lifted her sometimes from the saddle, and only the strength and sure-footedness of Young Nick brought them safely in one last mad scramble up the slippery bank beyond.

All the way she had no other fear than that she would be too late. Surely not so long as this could Judy hold out. When at last she arrived at the little log station house at Badger, she did not dismount, but managed to keep Young Nick before the door until she had roused them and heard her message telephoned to the new doctor at Wenham, three miles down the track.

"Tell him if he don't git thar soon—*soon!*—hit'll be no use to come."

Then she gave Young Nick his head. Faster even than they had come was their flying ride back. "If it had ha' been ary other mule we wouldn't ha' been thar yit," she said once to herself, in a little rush of gratitude to the strong beast beneath her.

BUT, in the very sight of home, Young Nick took his revenge—perhaps because it was his last chance, or because the spell of the night was wearing off. Swerving to avoid the last plunge into the stream, he freed himself from the tangle of bushes with one mad spring that unseated Nance and hurled her against the sharp rocks of the bank. Then, after a few vicious kicks, he cleared the stream with one flying leap, and dashed on home.

And thus it happened that the new doctor at Wenham,—who had wondered sometimes why he had ever come to the wilderness,—answering the call post-haste, came just in the nick of time to save two women's lives. But, of those two unborn lives, one had been crushed forever, out there in the cold of the dawn.

For days Nance lay perilously ill. Delirium succeeded delirium. But at last there came a day when, despite the fever still burning in her cheeks, she opened her eyes and took cognizance of life again. Memory stirred within her. Painfully she tried to gather up the lost threads of thought. Between this present moment and whatever lay behind it there was a wall, a dark, impenetrable wall of agony and pain. Then the wall became a veil, thin, diaphanous, sheer; but still she could not pierce it. The effort was more torturing than the pain itself.

THEN suddenly, as her glance wandered about the room, the miracle was granted. Sitting by the fire, her face as white and sweet as a bent lily, Judy sat nursing her baby. Just one minute Nance gazed at the picture, and then the past was hers again—but not quite.

"Whar's—whar's—?" she cried piteously.

"Nance!" Judy cried, coming over to her. "Air ye back to yerself?"

But Nance's eyes were on the little creature in her arms.

"Whar's—whar's—?" she tried again to ask, lifting her beseeching eyes to Judy. But Judy understood.

"Hit lost hits life fer this un," she answered tenderly.

Tears gathered in Nance's eyes and rolled down her wasted cheeks. In her heart there was a new ache of loneliness, a desolation so keen it seemed her heart would break.

Then to Judy was inspiration granted. Bending over, she laid the baby in Nance's arms, and smiled to see his little fingers close on hers.

"Hit's *ourn*," she whispered. "Don't ye see? Yourn an' mine together."

Lajoie, the Star and the Farmer

By BILLY EVANS

"THEY say this is my last year in the big league," remarked Napoleon Lajoie to me, just prior to his start for the South to begin training. "Perhaps it is, but a lot of people have been saying that about me for the last ten years, and I am still plugging along. If 1916 is my last, it comes without a pang of regret, for baseball has been exceedingly kind to me. I love the baseball diamond in the summer, but I love the old farm equally well in the winter. It will be the simple life for the entire year when I finally get out of baseball."

For twenty years—about three times the length of the career of the average big-league player—Larry Lajoie has basked in the spotlight of popularity. Despite the fact that no player was ever idolized more than the big Frenchman, it in no way affected him.

He's Popular with His Neighbors

ON a well stocked little farm in the village of South Euclid, fifteen miles from Cleveland, resides the great Napoleon Lajoie. For the last five or six winters Larry has lived the life of the typical farmer; and he gives much credit to the simple life of the farm for his success on the ball field.

The other inhabitants of South Euclid get a great deal of pride out of the fact that Lajoie is one of them. He is no less popular in his home village than he has always been in the various cities of the American League circuit. Every youngster in the place is a strong admirer of Larry. He knows most of them by their first names.

The present season marks Lajoie's twenty-first year as a big-league star. From his very entry into the game in 1896 with the Philadelphia club of the American League, he attracted widespread attention. Very few players who were in the game then remain now in harness. He is the only one of the players with the American League at the start who is still in active service.

Most of the good things have come to Lajoie in a baseball way, but he has had two disappointments. After realizing his ambition to become a manager, he failed to achieve his fondest hope—the winning of a pennant, with its right to take part in the World's Series. In 1908 Larry came closest to realizing his goal, the Cleveland club losing to Detroit by the scant margin of half a game. Failure to win that year was a severe setback to the big Frenchman. It took a great deal of the joy out of life—in fact, just about put an end to his managerial career; for the following year he retired as head of the Cleveland club to go back to the ranks as a private.

"To be the manager of a big-league club was once the height of my ambition," he says. "I achieved it, had my fling at the reins for about five years, and was glad then to pass it up and forget I ever was a manager. A manager, you know, is measured by one standard—success. He is immense if he wins, and a dub if he loses. I have been through the mill, and I know from experience. I have enjoyed all the sensations and endured all the troubles. Now that it is all over, I seriously question whether my career at the head of the club was worth while. I feel that it just cut my playing career by about five years."

If you want to hold your place in the game long after every one else your age is down and out, spend six months of the year amid the cows and chickens—that's Lajoie's formula.

"Who is the greatest pitcher you ever batted against, Larry?" I asked.

"I suppose you figure that question would set me to thinking, but it doesn't. I have batted against a great many wonderful pitchers in the last twenty years, but I have never in all that time faced a man who was harder for me to hit than Walter Johnson. I regard the star of the Washington team as by far the greatest pitcher I have ever faced. I know such a statement will cause considerable discussion, for National League adherents of the present time will point to Mathewson and Alexander as superior to Johnson. Unfortunately, I have never batted against either of these two pitchers. But I have seen them pitch, and have watched them closely; and, while I have the greatest admiration in the world for the marvelous ability they possess, still I say without the slightest hesitation that I would prefer hitting against either of them to Johnson."

The Greatest Pitchers Lajoie Has Faced

HERE is the way Lajoie places the greatest pitchers he has faced during his score of years in the majors, during which time he has piled up a batting average of considerably better than .300:

1 Walter Johnson
2 Joe Wood
Rube Waddell
3 Addie Joss
Ed Walsh
4 Bill Donovan
Eddie Plank
Vean Gregg
Jack Chesbro
Chief Bender
5 Jimmy McJames
Virgil Garvin
6 Joe Meekin
Cy Young
7 Kid Nichols
8 Clarke Griffith
Jimmy Callahan
9 Jack Taylor
Doc White

"What one thing about the game has appealed most to you?" I asked Larry.

"The honesty of the sport," was his immediate reply. "The spirit of the game never dies. A player may become temporarily disgruntled because of conditions that exist on the team of which he is a member; but he never tires of the sport. That is often the reason a player takes a new lease on life when sent to some other club. Baseball is the cleanest of professional sports. The absence of crookedness is due to the loyalty each man has for the game. In the twenty years I have been connected with the game I have seen hundreds of players come and go. In a great many cases, players believed their failure was due to reasons over which they had no control, yet never has a player dropped from the ranks said one single word about the honesty of the game. There could be no greater tribute to the sport. In conclusion, let me say that I like my base hits; but just now I like the cows and chickens and the simple life much better."